

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Beasley Forest Products, Inc.

Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership

It's Energizing

Client Profile:

Beasley Forest Products, Inc., a hardwood sawmill located in Hazlehurst, Georgia, produces lumber that is used for flooring, cabinets, paneling, siding, furniture and export. The company employs 140 people.

Situation:

Beasley had to quickly cut lumber and deliver it to customers or send it out to be kiln-dried. Green hardwood lumber has only an about a two-week shelf life before staining occurs and renders it virtually useless. Desiring to grow its business, the company saw the need to install new kilns on site. Having its own kilns would enable the company to warehouse finished lumber on-site. Also, dried hardwood lumber can be exported, so adding the kilns would allow the firm to expand its export business. Selecting a boiler system to fire the kilns presented a problem. The rising cost of natural gas made gas-fired boilers seem expensive to operate. Beasley Forest Products contacted the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

Georgia Tech's Office of Economic Development and Technology Ventures (EDTV) energy specialist, Mike Brown, performed an analysis of the company's business case and suggested a wood-fired boiler fueled by the firm's wood waste. Although a wood boiler costs more to install, its operating cost is substantially lower than a gas boiler since it can burn waste sawdust. The wood boiler is projected to consume approximately 7,300 tons of sawdust annually. With annual sawdust production of almost 70,000 tons, Beasley has more than adequate fuel available to operate the boiler. Brown also pointed out that because of the company's locale, it would be eligible for a U.S. Department of Agriculture alternative energy grant for farms and rural manufacturers. Beasley agreed on both counts. The grant application required a detailed description of the proposed project's technical aspects, which the company was incapable of providing, so Brown prepared it for the firm. The financial section of the grant was undertaken by Sara Davis in the Alma office of the Associates in Local Government, who used the technical description's cost estimates to complete the application.

Results:

- * Awarded \$118,000 grant to cost-share installation of sawdust-fired boiler.
- * Anticipated increase in revenue of \$3 million per year.

Testimonial:

"This project was absolutely crucial to the future viability of the company."

Darrell Beasley, Vice President

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